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PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH KHRUSHCHEV
Vienna, June 3 - 4, 1961

Special Background Paper

LINE OF APPROACH TO KHRUSHCHEV

This paper seeks to set forth certain lines of approach both general and specific which would offer the best possibility of getting through to Khrushchev and enhancing in his mind the creditability of United States positions. It seeks to eliminate emphasis on aspects of Soviet policy and its relation with the non-communist world, which experience has shown is without value and apt to be detrimental to the purposes we seek in this meeting.

1. General

The emphasis throughout should be placed upon the Soviet foreign policy in its national aspects and any ideological topics or reference to the general threat of communism in the world should not be dealt with per se but as a function of and in relation to Soviet state policy.

The United States and the Soviet Union as chief protagonists in the present world-wide struggle, find themselves in antagonistic confrontation in regard to every international political problem. This is most certainly the Soviet view which treats every issue as a battle in a continuing struggle in which negotiation is not sought by the Soviet Government for the purpose of solution of a given problem, but as a weapon in political warfare to obtain a Soviet or communist victory at the expense of the non-communist world.

There is only one major subject on which there would appear to be a coincident of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union, and that is on the assumed common desire of both to avoid nuclear war. Community of interest on this point should be the basic and starting point of the entire approach to Khrushchev. On the basis of this common desire to avoid nuclear war, the United States and the Soviet Union, as the two leading powers in the world, have an enormous responsibility in the matter of the preservation of peace. While recognizing that we will not find any genuine common ground in regard to most if not all of the international issues in dispute, the manner in which these disagreements are handled in practice should be approached in the light of our common interest in avoiding nuclear war and in our great responsibility as world powers.

2. War

It should be emphasized to Khrushchev that the artificial distinction between the three categories of war, contained in his January sixth speech and the eighty-one Party document, is inherently artificial and dangerous. The thesis that certain kinds of war can be segregated out from others is a most dangerous thesis. In reality, war is war and does not lend itself to such tidy compartmentalization. Any form of armed action supported by a great power carries with it the obvious danger of

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spreading, and thereby moving from one category to another. Support by the Soviet Union of "wars of national liberalization" -- an extremely flexible definition at best -- is entirely incompatible with the professed Soviet desire for peaceful co-existence.

While Khrushchev will probably not be too receptive to anything to do with the United Nations, nonetheless the only ground rules for co-existence which exist in a jointly agreed document are in the Charter itself, which specifically binds its signatories to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force, except in individual or collective self-defense, and to settle their international disputes by peaceful means. It should be pointed out that the attempt to advance the communist cause by small internal wars, i.e. wars of national liberation, is a certain path towards world war if consistently followed, in the state of the world today. This is the logic of any such Soviet position and no amount of tactical skill or self-deception could obscure this reality.

The United States is a great power, and the Soviet Union is a great power. The United States is very cognizant of this fact and does not and will not seek to confront a great power, i.e. the Soviet Union, with a series of intolerable choices which would involve either the acceptance of international political defeat, or the recourse to war as a means of averting it. The Soviet Union, for its part, should recognize the same reality in regard to the United States. Quite apart from the subjective will of its leaders, it is not realistic to believe that a great power can accept a succession of attempted or actual political defeats without at some point in the process having recourse to its great power.

While concentrating on the responsibilities and interests of the Soviet Union as a great power, at some point in the discussion the duality of Soviet operations in the foreign field should be brought out, but only, as indicated above, as the function of or in relation to its national policy. Reference should be made, in this connection, to the incompatibility between the public utterances of Khrushchev as the leader of the Soviet State and the positions taken and the views expressed in his January sixth speech as head of the dominant party in the world communist movement, with particular reference in the latter document to the violent and distorted statements of hostility towards the United States as a country. On specific issues, the following line of approach is suggested:

a) Germany and Berlin

Stemming from the general considerations outlined above, it could be said to Khrushchev that he should not expect that the United States and its allies would accept the political defeat involved in the loss or weakening of their existing position in Berlin. We have firm obligations and solemn commitments in this matter and to give them up or to permit them to be eroded would constitute a political defeat in Europe, which would be quite intolerable and unacceptable to a great power, no matter what the consequences.

It should be pointed out that the entire situation in Germany is abnormal, that that of Berlin as a city is abnormal, and that we cannot accept the characterization of one part of an abnormal situation as its sole abnormality. The situation in Germany has existed since the end of the war, and while unsatisfactory to all concerned, any change would have to be an improvement, or at least no worse, from the point of view of all concerned -- the Western allies, the people of West Berlin, as well as the Soviet and East German side. In a situation as delicately balanced as the situation in Germany, the side which seeks to change it to its advantage and to the detriment of the other side is the one that assumes the responsibility for the risks to peace inherent in such a course of action.

The standard Soviet argument concerning the necessity of doing away with the "vestiges of the war" is obviously a formalistic statement of the position and cannot be accepted. The real vestige of the war to be corrected is the division of Germany, but since this realistically does not seem to be an immediate possibility, the delicate balance should not be upset. If ways of improving the situation without detriment to any of the parties concerned could be found, we would be prepared to consider any such suggestion. The proposal for a "free West Berlin" does not satisfy these criteria, since it would appear to make very little sense, even from a Soviet point of view, unless it brought them certain advantages with corresponding disadvantages to the Western Powers and the people of West Berlin, which would not be tolerable for the reasons given above.

One possibility might be to return to the '44 agreement and to see if the statute then outlined for all Berlin could not be reinstituted with certain agreed modifications. One other course of action would be, if Khrushchev feels he must proceed with a peace treaty with the GDR, to do so leaving unchanged the obligations of the Four Powers in regard to West Berlin. We would not subscribe to such a peace treaty, but its conclusion leaving West Berlin in statu quo might be a possibility.

b) Disarmament

It would be well to focus the disarmament discussion on the current test ban negotiations since these are the only actual negotiations in progress in this field which, theoretically at least, should offer a prospect for agreement. The chief obstacle for agreement at the present time is the retrogression by the Soviet side in introducing the doctrine of a Three-Power Committee with individual veto power in place of a single administrator selected for his objectivity as an international civil servant.

Khrushchev should be questioned on this point as to how any such mechanism could possibly operate, since a veto power would render ineffective, and indeed ridiculous, the entire concept of an objective system of international verification and control. He should be pushed

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hard to justify the workability of any such mechanism. Care, however, should be exercised that this point is not built up to a degree whereby a Soviet retreat from this position might be utilized by them to justify major concessions on our part in other aspects of the test ban talks still in dispute.

If, however, Khrushchev sticks firmly to his insistence on the troika and endeavors to transfer it into the general field of disarmament, he should be told that there seems to be little prospect of any fruitful progress in this entire field as long as this position is maintained. However, in all likelihood, he will not seek to extend the troika principle into general disarmament, but is more apt to stress the standard Soviet position that when disarmament is fully or even substantially achieved, the Soviet Government would accept any form of inspection. If he makes this latter point clear, then the discussion on general disarmament should follow along the lines of our position paper (FMK-B/9).

Conclusion

In general, the impression we would desire to leave on Khrushchev is first of all one of utmost seriousness in regard to the current world situation; the desire of the United States to find means to handle our disagreements in such a way as to avoid war and that, to this end, realistic and responsible action on the part of the Soviet Union will be matched by equal responsible and realistic action on the part of the United States; that world peace cannot be preserved by an attempt to inflict political defeats upon great powers and our reciprocal actions should be governed by some form of ground rules in order to avoid the type of actions which can set off an automatic chain of events leading to the end that both countries desire to avoid.

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Drafted by:

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